

Survivors by evendanstevens

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Summary:

Joyce and Hopper return home after their hellish evening with more than a few words to say to each other.

Epilogue/Bonus Chapter to 'I Will Light a Fire'.

Survivors

Author's Note:

my first Jopper smut please be kind...

When it became clear to Hopper that everyone was exhausted from the night they'd had and the ensuing reunions, he decided it was time to make a move. He hung his head for a moment, not looking forward for what was about to happen. He could've left till the next day, after all it was two in the morning. But he wanted it over, because right now he couldn't stand the hurt and angered look in Joyce's eyes whenever he looked at her.

So he had propositioned Jonathan by giving him the keys to the cabin, with strict instructions to take the kids there for the night. He had explained that he didn't like them staying somewhere that was on the suits' radar, that it was best they stayed at the cabin while the government officials were sniffing around. Jonathan had understood but then inquired about Hopper and his mother. Hopper quietly told him he was taking her home, that they needed to have a 'talk'. Jonathan's eyes had formed slits as he looked between the two with a questioning look. Eventually thinking it best not to ask, he took the keys and began piling the kids into the car.

Jane was just about to follow when Hopper placed a gentle hand on her arm, halting her.

"Jane," he began as she stopped and turned to face him with curious eyes. Hopper swallowed. "About what Brenner said, about when we found Will. I never me-"

"Dad," Jane's soft voice calling him 'Dad' was enough to make Hopper want to cry out with relief. She gave him a kind smile and placed her hand on his shoulder. "I understand," she dipped her head, emphasising her understanding.

Hopper bit back tears as he brought his hand up to hold hers in his own with a delicate squeeze. He pulled her into his side and gave her a quick embrace and kissed the top of her head. "I love ya, kid," he

murmured against her hair.

“Love you too, Dad,” Jane sniffed as she pulled away from him. He ruffled her hair affectionately and she beamed up at him proudly.

“You make sure you get cleaned up before bed, alright?” he raised an authoritative finger at her, a hint of a teasing smile on her face.

She rolled her eyes before turning away toward her friends. “Sure, Dad,” she shouted back to him.

Hopper gave the car a small smile as he waved off Jonathan as he drove away. He didn’t want to turn back around toward Joyce, he could already feel her eyes burning into the back of his skull. Eventually he worked up the courage to face her, but never actually worked up the courage to look her in the eye.

She was stood there, her arms defiantly wrapped around her chest. Apparently she felt the same way about him, her eyes never leaving the ground, not wanting to look at her. But there was an expectant look about her that Hopper couldn’t deny. She was expecting him to make the first move, but her defensive stance screamed ‘do not approach’. So with a huff he walked round to the driver’s side of his Blazer and waited for Joyce to follow suit.

The drive back to Joyce’s house was filled with uneasy silence. Neither of them said a word, but the tension was still palpable in the atmosphere. Jim likened it to calm before the storm. And the closer they got to the house, the more Hopper felt like he was going to lose his mind. His hands gripped the steering wheel, his knuckles tightening the more he thought about Brenner’s arms around Joyce, the gun pressed to her head. And it certainly didn’t help whenever he sneaked a glance at Joyce’s bloodied face in the mirror. He had caught her catch a glimpse of her reflection, heard the quiet gasp escape her mouth. He thought it might be the moment to reach over and hold her hand, but the stubbornness that resided in him stopped him.

When they reached the house, the car had barely stopped moving before Joyce had jumped out of the car, slamming the door behind her and trudging to the door. Hopper waited for a moment, letting

her unlock the door and turn the lights on. He dipped his head and took a deep breath. It was now or never. With a heavy sigh, he opened the door and followed Joyce into the house.

When he got there, Joyce was sitting silently on the couch, arms crossed, leaning forward on her knees. She didn't look at Hopper when he came into the room.

"So what, we're just not going to talk about it?" Hopper grumbled, taking his jacket off and setting in on the couch, standing over Joyce.

She still didn't look at him. "Talk about what, Jim?" she sneered, venom in her voice as she feigned ignorance.

Hopper clicked his tongue off the bridge of his mouth and looked away with his hands on his hips. "Oh I don't know, Joyce, how about almost getting yourself killed, *twice*?" he stared down at her.

Joyce scoffed and shook her head. "Oh that's rich coming from you."

Hopper's eyebrows furrowed as his face fell into a frown. "I did what I had to do to protect you. To save all of you. What you did was just reckless," he accused her sternly, trying to keep his voice as calm as possible.

"You call that 'saving' us?" Joyce turned to look up at him, her jaw clenched as she stared at in a wide eyed fury. "No, Hopper, that was just your egotistical, hero *bullshit* and you know it," she spat at him.

"So what I was just supposed to let Brenner get away? Is that what you wanted?!" Hopper moved round so that he was standing across from her.

Joyce came to her feet then, refusing to let him stand over her and intimidate her. "What I wanted was you to talk to me! Let me help for once, instead of running in guns blazing, no giving a damn about anyone else," she glared up at him, nostrils flaring. "You shut me out, you literally threw me out! Like I was just some collateral damage you wanted to get out of the way! I'm not some fucking damsel in distress, Jim!" she raised her voice then, not a full yell but damn near close.

“Not a damsel in distress, huh?” Hopper scoffed with a less than amused laugh. “Tell me, Joyce, was Brenner holding a gun to your head part of your grand rescue?! This is why I didn’t tell you, you don’t *think* Joyce, you never *think*!” Hopper exclaimed, bringing his hands to his head.

He saw the rage burn in Joyce’s eyes. “It was no better than your plan, just run in there, find him and hope he doesn’t kill you, or doesn’t kill Jane? Was that it? Wow, fantastic plan, Hopper, inspired!” she mockingly clapped at him before bringing a hand to her forehead and placing the other on her hip. “I am so *tired* of you calling the shots all god damn time,” she let out an exasperated sigh and shut her eyes for a moment. “You think you can just order me around, but I am not one of your deputies, Jim!” her eyes flew open and she turned her gaze back to him. “You don’t get to decide if I’m in or out of saving the people I care about!”

Hopper scratched his beard, as if he were in thought. “You’re right, Joyce, you’re so right. Next time I’ll just let you do what you want to do next time, and hey maybe you’ll get lucky and someone *won’t* beat the shit out of you!” Hopper spat back at her, his face felt hot amongst his anger and he tried, god did he try to calm down. But when his eyes took in her features he just couldn’t. “I mean just look at your face, Joyce! You call that a success?”

Joyce shrugged and threw her arms. “Well, maybe if I had actually been in on the plan, maybe if you had let you come with you, I wouldn’t have had to storm in on my *own*, and Brenner wouldn’t have a chance to hurt me!”

“Or maybe if you had just fucking listened to me and stayed out of it, you would’ve been safe!” Hopper yelled this time, but Joyce didn’t flinch.

“Oh what and just sit and wait outside the building, not knowing if you’re ever going to walk back out again?!” Joyce screamed at him, she wanted to throw something at him. Angry tears sprang to her eyes and she ran a hand through her hair in frustration, not wanting to look weak in front of him. And yet here her emotions were, getting the best of her. “Do I need to remind you of the last time someone I cared about went on a solo mission in that place?”

Hopper tore his gaze away from her. “That’s different,” he grumbled quietly.

“How? How is that any different?!” Joyce hissed crossing her arms to stop her hands from fidgeting.

Hopper pinched the bridge of his nose. “Because it just is.”

“No, it’s not. You went in there, not giving two shits about how much it would destroy me if you didn’t come-“

“Destroy *you*?!” Hopper had to cut her off. She was dancing on a very delicate nerve. “You were the one who thought it’d be a fucking fantastic idea to pull a gun on Brenner, knowing full well what would happen if you missed. And did you think to tell me about *that* little plan of yours, huh?!” Hopper yelled and flinched slightly when Joyce seem to shrink in on herself as her eyes went to the floor. “Do you have any idea how much it fucking killed me, to think that you were gone? Do you, Joyce?!”

Joyce harshly bit down on her lip. She looked up at him then, and behind his anger she saw just how broken he was, how emotionally exhausted he was after thinking he had lost her. “What did it feel like?”

Hopper’s brows knotted as he tilted his head in confusion. “What?”

“What did it feel like, Jim? Thinking I was gone,” she stared up at him intensely. Hopper knew that whatever he answered, she was building to something.

“Like the world ended. Like the fucking world ended right there and then,” he sighed, not breaking away from her gaze.

Joyce brought her hands to her face, forming a triangle around her nose and mouth as she thought for a moment. “And yet after you felt that, you thought it would be perfectly okay for me to feel it too? If you never came out, did you think that maybe my world wouldn’t end too?!” she challenged him with a glare.

“Fuck sake, Joyce,” he took a deep breath, and closed his eyes as he shook his head. “You are completely missing the point. I didn’t die

tonight. I didn't even get hurt. But you went and almost got yourself killed twice. And just look at your god damn face, Joyce," he angrily gestured to the bruises on her face, keeping his voice as quiet as he could, grasping for any sense of self control.

Joyce turned away from him then. "I don't care about my face, I don't care about the fact I got hurt. What I care about is that you and I are supposed to be a team. We're supposed to look out for each other, and you shut me out. You went off on a suicide mission and you told me..." Joyce let out a shaky breath. She wasn't going to bring it up now, it was a conversation for another time. "And then you just left me," she let out a quiet sigh and looked back at him. He wasn't looking at her, his eyes pinned to the ground. Her anger began to dissipate as she looked at him. Something about the expressive features of his face that made her heart hammer like crazy, the feelings she had for him beginning to creep back up and take over her rage. She felt a sudden need to walk over and wrap her arms around him and never let him go, but she fought it. Her response hung entirely on what he said next.

"And everything you did tonight just proves that I made the right call in keeping you out of the plan," he said through gritted teeth. And suddenly Joyce's need to wrap her arms around him disappeared and she felt a sudden urge to slap him across the face. "You care too much, Joyce, and it makes you a liability." He told her bluntly as he stepped toward her. "I did what I knew was right for the family. For *your* family. I will always do whatever I can to help your family, Joyce. And if that means taking you out of the danger, if that means that sometimes I don't tell you my plan in order to protect you and your kids, then so be it," he towered over her then, looking down at her sincerely. She looked up at him the same way a kid getting told off by their least favourite teacher does. With pure defiance.

"I don't regret the choices I made tonight. The only reason you got hurt was because you put yourself in danger. Not me," he told her, a finality to his tone.

His words stung. They made tears threaten to fall from her eyes but she held them in. If he was going to push her buttons, voluntarily or not, she was going to push back.

“Whatever you can to protect my family, huh?” she asked him, her gaze burning against his. He nodded. “Then where were you tonight? Where were you tonight? When they came, when they took us, where *were* you?”

Hopper’s face immediately fell. She watched the emotions dance in his features; sadness, anger, regret, guilt, astonishment.

“You say I care too much, but you were the one who left here cause of your god damn injured ego,” she continued her verbal assault in a venomous, quiet voice. “Maybe if *you* stopped caring too much, none of this would’ve happened.” Her tone now matched the same bluntness he had given her when he had uttered his scathing words.

Hopper backed away from her, his eyes falling to the ground. And suddenly the sadness that surrounded her filled her to the brim with guilt. It was a low blow, an unfair statement. She knew fine well that the ‘what if’s’ of Hopper actually being there had been baring down on his mind since he found out they had been taken. She knew that it his own guilt regarding his absence was already picking away at him. And she had used it as defensive leverage in a stupid fight like a total asshole. She felt her stomach tighten at the sight of him. And then she couldn’t look at him anymore.

“I’m going to take a shower,” she told him decidedly. She waited for him to say something, say anything. But his body remained frozen in place as he stared down at the floor.

When it was clear to her that he wasn’t going to say or do anymore, she hastily retreated to the bathroom, slamming the door closed behind her. She felt hot tears beginning to fall as she stripped off her clothes. Her trousers and shirt pooled in a pile at her feet as she reached over to turn on the shower, hissing with surprise when the first splash of cold water hit her poorly positioned arm. Stepping back, she shed her bra and panties and threw them next to her clothes pile.

Cautiously, she stepped into the now warm shower. Her body ached as she climbed over the edge of the bath and pulled back the curtain. Her muscles practically sang the second the water hit her skin, the much needed warmth instantly relaxing her. But it didn’t stop the

tears. Despite the trauma she and everyone else had been through tonight, she selfishly wondered what it meant for her relationship with Hopper. Sure, they had both survived, but their fight earlier could well have almost cost them their lives. And the look on his face when she unfairly blamed him for their capture replayed in her head, prompting quiet sobs to escape her.

He hated her now, he had to. She had been cruel, crueller than she ever needed to be in her moment of anger. He had said some awful things too, but the voice in her head nagged her that she had stepped over the line. And now she thought to herself what life was going to be like without this secret affair she and Hopper had. She hadn't wanted to admit it, but now that it was over, she had to confess to herself that this period of sneaking around, the stolen kisses when no one was watching, the feel of his arms around her as they lay naked in bed next to each other, had been the happiest she'd been in god knows how long.

She put her head under the water then, and watched in a restrained horror as the blood from her face began to circle the drain. Gently she brought her hands to her face and lightly rubbed her face of any lingering dried blood and sweat and began to feel like she was already healing. She knew she probably still look a total mess, but nevertheless at least she was feeling clean. The tears still gently flowed, but at least the feel of the warm water was relaxing her enough so that she was calming down.

She wasn't sure how long she'd been in the shower when the bathroom door slowly opened then softly closed. She listened for a moment for the movement behind the curtain, her heart leapt when she heard the clink of a belt coming undone then hitting the floor. In nervous anticipation, she waited, closing her eyes unsure she would be able to look at him, unable to bare those sad eyes that she'd left him with.

She surprised a cry of relief when she felt him behind her, his body a cool comparison to heat of the shower. She felt a shiver run down her spine when his cold arms brushed hers as he reached out to warm up his hands before touching her. Her stomach tightened ever so slightly when she heard the quiet, satisfied groan of the warmth on his skin escaped him. When he was content, he brought his hands back and

placed them on her shoulders. He took a further step toward her, the front of his body just ghosting the back of hers as he leaned down and placed three gentle, slow kisses on her neck.

“I’m sorry, Joyce,” he whispered against her as his face buried into her neck and his arms lightly wrapped around her front. “Jesus, I’m so sorry,” the weak tone of his voice was enough to make her heart melt.

She shook her head and brought her hands up, rubbing his arms soothingly and leaned her head to rest against his bicep. “No, no, I’m sorry, Hop,” he pulled her close to him at the sound of his nickname. Of *her* nickname for him. The feel of him, his arms wrapped around her, was enough to warm her more than any hot shower could.

She stepped carefully and turned to face him, his arms staying around her. She looked up at him through long lashes, small droplets of water dripping from them. And she saw in him a look she had only seen a handful of times in all the years she’d known him. He looked defeated, full of regret and sadness, his gaze so soft and melancholy it almost broke her heart. He looked vulnerable. Her face fell into a dismayed frown. She reached up to him and ran her fingers through his dampening hair.

“I should never have said that, I’m so sorry, Hop,” her eyes fell to her feet. He pulled her even closer with one arm then, putting his other hand between the two of them so he could place a finger under her chin. He gently pushed her chin up so that her gaze would meet his.

He didn’t say anything, his eyes simply staring into hers as they shared a forgiving moment of silence. As if to seal their apologies, he bent his head down to her and placed a delicate, chaste kiss onto her lips.

But there was something about the way his naked body pressed against her, the way he held her so intimately, the way his lips had barely touched hers for a second that sent a knot straight to her stomach. And suddenly she wanted more of him, *needed* more of him. And from the darkened look in Hopper’s eyes, he appeared to feel the same.

His gaze quickly darted between her eyes and her lips. And when his tongue slipped out briefly to wet his bottom lip in a moment of contemplation, Joyce took her opportunity to lift herself up and crush her lips against his. Hopper had barely registered the feel of her hardened kiss before his arm looped around the small of her back, keeping her locked and tight against him. His lips met hers with equal fervour, his free hand going to the back of her head, lightly tangling in her hair. Her arms wrapped around his neck, desperate to get as close to him as possible.

When her tongue brushed against his bottom lip, he a low growl came from the back of his throat. His hand tightened on her hair as his tongue slipped into her mouth, a soft moan escaping Joyce's mouth. As he began to feel the excitement grow below, he pulled away from her abruptly. He studied her face, her eyes were still closed and there was an anticipation on her lips that just looked so damn inviting. But he had to be sure.

"Joyce, I didn't mean, uh, I, I mean this wasn't why I came in here," he stuttered out in a rushed explanation. He didn't want her to think he had just come to join her in the shower as some half assed seduction technique. He had intended for it to be completely innocent, a more intimate form of apology. Joyce's eyes slowly opened in confusion as she regarded the hesitant expression on his face. "It's been a long night, and you're upset. I just don't want you to feel..."

"Hopper," her voice was quiet yet stern, enough to immediately grab his attention and stop him from talking. She retracted her right hand from the back of his neck and placed it on his cheek. She slowly shook her head. "I'm not upset," she dipped her head and held his gaze in a look of assurance. "I want this. I want you."

Well, that was enough to convince him. His lips rushed back to her mouth, Joyce humming in encouragement as his tongue met hers. He quickly pulled away, lips running along her jaw before placing hard and soft kisses down her neck. "Are you sure?" he murmured between kisses.

"Yes, Hopper, please..." she panted needlessly as he continue his dizzying kisses on her skin.

The breathless plea stirred something deep down inside him. In a swift movement, his hands went to her ass, lifting her slightly to push her up against the wall of the shower. She let out a delightful whimper of surprise as his lips crashed against hers once again. His body still pressed tightly against hers, his hand moved from behind her and his fingers travelled to her inner thigh. He then withdrew his lips from hers, kissing down her chest before taking her right nipple into his mouth, his free hand coming to grasp her left, his fingers tweaking and teasing. Joyce hissed at the sensitive sensation as he sucked and licked, the fingers that stroked at her inner thigh with a frustrating feather light touch moved up toward her centre.

His fingers teased up and down her slit before he curled a finger into her. Joyce let out a desperate moan at the small intrusion. She needed more of him, and she knew he knew how much he was teasing her. Slipping another finger, he began to gently pump inside. His lips alternated to the other nipple and she felt him smirk against her skin as her hips began to involuntarily move against his hand, seeking more of him.

Taking the hint, he pulled away from her breast and crouched down further, his lips trailing down until he was eventually on his knees in front of her. He withdrew his fingers and she whimpered at the loss of his touch. When he moved his hand to the back of her thigh, pulling her leg up to rest on his shoulder she looked down at him. If her body wasn't burning with anticipation, she would've been terrified she would fall. But the heat inside her only seemed to grow when she met Hopper's dark and intense eyes as he stared back up at her. And when he leaned forward and his flat tongue licked up her slit, eyes not breaking from hers, she felt her entire body stiffen with arousal and she let out a guttural groan.

Her eyes squeezed shut and she gripped his shoulder with a bruising touch as he leaned further forward and explored her womanhood with his tongue. Her head leaned back against the cool wall as his tongue darted upward inside her, fucking her with his mouth. He moaned against her, the taste of her intoxicating him. As she felt the imminence of her orgasm begin to build her hands left him for a brief moment as she desperately tried to cling onto the wall behind her.

"Fuck, Hopper..." she hissed as she brought her hands back down to

his hair, running her hands through it desperately. He hummed against her, feeling her walls begin to contract on his tongue. Knowing she was close, he brought his mouth away from her, swiftly replacing it with his fingers. His mouth quickly moved to her clit, furiously licking against her as she cried out. With one harsh flick of his tongue and a strategic curl of his fingers, she was crashing down around his hand. Her orgasm left her lips in incoherent sobs of pleasure and he moaned as he felt her body shudder. He slowed his movements as he drew out her ecstasy, waiting for her breathing to even out before taking his fingers and mouth away from her.

He slowly got back to his feet, taking in the sight of her as he did so. Her face was flushed, her body dripping and her mouth parted in the aftershock of her orgasm. She was still panting when he reached his full height and he smiled down at her. She was absolutely stunning. Her eyes were wide and awestruck, words apparently a foreign concept to her in that moment. He cupped her cheeks and leaned down to kiss her slowly, but passionate nonetheless, his tongue meeting hers, letting her taste herself. She whimpered against him before pulling away from him.

Her eyes searched his face before travelling down to lay her gaze on his impressive erection that never failed to excite her. Hopper smirked as his eyes followed hers. And when looked back up at him, he saw the twinkle of desire in her that made him feel weak in the knees.

“Bedroom. Now.” She nodded quickly. Hopper could only nod too in response as he quickly reached behind him and through the curtain open and carefully stepped backwards out of the shower.

Joyce barely had time to turn the shower off before Hopper had reached over and lifted her up by the ass. She squealed and giggled excitedly as she wrapped her legs around his middle. Her laughter ceased as his lips went to her collar bone and he continued to kiss her wherever he could as he walked them to her bedroom. Joyce reflected for a moment on the fact he could effortlessly lead them to her bedroom without even having to see where he was going.

Her thoughts left her head when he kicked the door open to her room and moved her over to the bed, placing her down. The outside air hit

her and sent shivers down her body but she quickly returned to the warmth as Hopper crawled toward her, kissing up her body as he went. His mouth hovered over her right breast and was about to pull her nipple back into her mouth when Joyce quickly shuffled downward, putting her hand between them and wrapping her hand round his hardened length and began to stroke him.

Hopper moaned as he glanced down, watching as her small hand worked him, sending electricity to every nerve of his being. He looked back at her, the mischief in her eyes oh so endearing as he smiled breathlessly at her. She wiped the smile from his face as she tightened her grip and increased her pace, sending Hopper's head rolling and a low groan escaped him.

"You keep that up, sweetheart, I'm not going to last much longer," he murmured, pulling himself up so he could lay a hard kiss where her neck met her shoulder that made her squirm beneath him and let go off him. He moved his hands up to her breasts, causing her to arch her back up to meet his touch. His lips curved into a smile against her skin, always loving how responsive she was to him.

Pulling away from her ever so slightly, he reached between them to grab his cock. He gently rubbed her clit with the tip, revelling in the way her head fell back into the bed as she moaned. He then moved down to tease her entrance and gasped quietly as he felt her arousal against his own.

"Jesus, you're so fucking wet..." he observed with a pleasurable sigh. His eyes drifted to her face as she blushed.

"Your fault," she smiled at him as she bit her lip. He smirked proudly, leaning down to kiss her, purposefully letting the tip of his cock only just dip into her entrance causing her to let out a frustrated whimper against his lips. "Such a goddamn tease..." she hissed as he pulled away from her, his hand reaching to the side of her and into the drawers next to her bed.

"Patience, Joyce, patience..." he teased, leaving a lingering kiss on her jaw as his hand fished around for the packet of condoms. Eventually finding one, he brought himself up onto his knees and took a moment to appreciate the view in front of him. Joyce naked,

her knees up and thighs pressed together, eyes wandering up and down his body through thick lashes in impatient anticipation. She was a goddamn vision.

He gave himself a few strokes before pulling the condom over his length. Fully sheathed, he gently pried open her legs and reached forward to the top of the bed and sharply pulled her towards him. Lining up with her entrance, he met her eyes and gave her one last grin of desire before thrusting forward and filling her.

Her eyes widened and she let out a quiet gasp. They had done this so many times now, yet she knew she would never fully get used to the size of him. He leaned forward and pressed assuring kisses to her forehead and cheeks as he waited for her tight walls to adjust, trying so hard to resist the urge to move inside her. They breathed deeply together for a while as Hopper stared down at her. The intensity in his eyes was enough to send another surge of heat to her core. In response she began to move her hips against him.

Taking that as her approval, Hopper groaned as he began to slowly thrust inside her. Her hands reached up to his hair, running her fingers through it as she matched his pace with her own. They panted as they moved together, but the fire burning in the pit of Joyce's stomach demanded more. So when he bent down to kiss her, she caught his lip with her teeth with a gentle tug. It was enough to emit a growl from Hopper's who lips moved to her neck as he quickened his pace. At Joyce's murmured requests in his ear, he thrust into her with hard, rough strokes.

Her climax building, Hopper moved his hand between them, rubbing gentle circles on her clit. He lifted his head to watch as she squeezed her eyes shut and bit down on her lips as her breathing became erratic. She was absolutely magnificent. She moaned when Hopper growled against her again, the feel of her completely overwhelming him. And as he felt her begin to pulse around him, he increased the pressure of his fingers and moved his mouth up to her ear.

"Come for me, Joyce," he tenderly demanded. And so she did, crying out his name as his teeth on her earlobe pushed her over the edge. Her nails dug into his back, causing him to grunt against her. Hopper continued to thrust deep inside her as he drew out her pleasure,

fighting hard not to finish himself as she tightened around him. He kept his eyes away from her face, knowing full well that the sight of her moaning his name with her eyes shut tight would sure be the end of him.

He slowed down as she recovered, believing himself finally able to look at her, he pulled his head up from her neck and met her gaze. Her eyes were hazy as she panted beneath him, her chest heaving and brushing against his own. When her eyes came into focus she looked up at him, bringing a hand to his cheek and looking at him with sheer intensity as he continued to move inside her.

“I love you,” she breathlessly whispered.

Hopper immediately stopped moving as his whole body stiffened. His eyes widened in pure shock as he gaped at her. “What?” was all he could say.

“Is now not a good time?” she glanced away from him, nervously before looking back at him and then sinking her head back into the pillow. “Or did you only say that to distract me earlier? Because if you did I’m going to be so pissed off wi-“

He cut her off midsentence by bringing his lips down to hers in a bruising kiss that literally took her breath away as she gasped in surprise.

“You love me?” he asked, that vulnerability in his eyes was back but this time there was no sadness there. No, this time all Joyce could see was cautious hope and restrained happiness.

She smiled and tilted her head at him, as though to feign offence that he would need her to repeat herself. “I love you, Jim Hopper,” she reached up and placed a kiss on his cheek that caused even more colour to rush to his face. As she pulled away she gently rubbed her nose against his, triggering a smile to form on his face.

He rested his forehead against hers. “I love you so fucking much,” he admitted with a contently heavy sigh.

Joyce scoffed at him teasingly. “How charming,” she rolled her eyes

playfully at him, her smile too infectious for her own good.

“Well, what if I don’t feel like being charming right now?” he mused, a sense of mischief sparkling in his eye that only intrigued Joyce.

She furrowed her brows in confusion. “What do you m- ah!”

He cut her off by rolling them over so that she was now on top of him and he roughly thrust up into her, hitting that spot inside her that made her cry out. She gripped his shoulders, bracing herself but opened her eyes when he didn’t follow up on his movement. Instead he grinned up at her teasingly, clearly feeling very smug about the responses he could conjure from her with his movements.

Deciding that simply wouldn’t do, she cut off his next thrust by rotating her hips against him. This time it was his head that rolled back into the bed with a groan, his hands coming up to her hips as she moved, his fingers digging into her skin. She moaned as moved on him, revelling in the way he writhed underneath her.

“Jesus, Joyce, fuck...” he hissed, the sound of her name leaving his lips in a moment of helpless desire only spurred her on more.

As much as she loved to submit to him, the man truly knew his way around her body and she couldn’t help but indulge in his talents, there was something about watching him stir and moan with pleasure because of *her*. She loved making him feel good, she loved him telling her how good she made him feel. It eased her insecurities about him having slept with half the town. The first time they had done this, Joyce had been incredibly nervous that she wasn’t going to be good enough, that she wouldn’t compare to Marissa the Librarian, or the young girl that worked at the bar or any of the others for the that matter. But the first time she had heard him moan her name, something had sparked inside her, and after that Hopper couldn’t keep his hands off of her, wanting her at any given moment, constantly trying to get her alone so he could feel her again. After that, Joyce wasn’t so nervous anymore.

As she moved against him, picking up the pace of her thrusts she began to feel herself reaching her peak. Keeping her pace she leaned forward and pressed her lips against Hopper’s neck. Feeling her begin

to tighten, Hopper moved his hands to her ass and thrust up into her, hitting that spot that made her groan and hiss his name. He murmured incoherent moans of encouragement as he brought her over the edge. The feel of her convulsing around him was enough to bring him to his end, also. Crying out her name as he worked them to completion with a final growl of pleasure.

They stayed like that for a while, Joyce's head buried in the crook of his neck, Hopper's hand soothing her hair as they panted together. Eventually she rolled off of him, still breathing heavily as she brought her arms over her head, stretching out. He reluctantly pulled himself out of the bed to dispose of the condom in her waste bin, coming back and pulling the covers over the two of them as he heard Joyce begin to shiver as the outside air hit her still damp skin.

He moved close to her, putting his arm around her as she rolled onto her side and pressed up against him. As her finger trailed delicate patterns on his bare chest, Hopper could only think about how lucky he truly was. To have gone from almost losing her twice in one night, to having her next to him as they calmed down from their respective peaks, well it was almost too overwhelming for him. He leaned down and placed a hard kiss on her head as he squeezed her close to him, the feel of her in his arms never quite being enough.

"So you really love me, huh?" Joyce's quiet voice broke through the comfortable silence. At her words, Hopper moved to lie on his side and face her.

His chest didn't tighten like it did when he looked at her face before. There were still cuts and bruises that he couldn't ignore, but in that moment she never looked more beautiful to him. He leaned forward and placed delicate kisses on every bruise, cut and scrape that he could see, listening to her sigh underneath him as she closed her eyes. She basked in the loving sensation he provided, her hand running up and down his arm as he did so.

"I really do, Joyce, I really love you," he murmured as he pulled away to press his lips softly against her own. She smiled when their kiss broke and let out a small laugh.

"So I guess we're not just 'screwing around' anymore then?" she

mused nervously, eyes pulling away from him.

“Jesus Joyce, you know I didn’t mean that. I just,” their first fight of the evening seemed like years ago as he realised they never did quite resolve it. It seemed like a petty, meaningless disagreement now compared to everything that had happened since then. But nevertheless, he had said what he’d said and he needed to explain him. “When I heard that you might be going out with someone else, I panicked. I was like a stupid goddamn jealous teenager all over again and I-“

“Hop,” she cut him off, bringing her hand to his forehead and running her fingers soothingly through his hair. “I get it, don’t worry,” she gave him a small smile of reassurance as she gazed into his eyes.

He mimicked her actions with his fingers in her hair. “This, what we have, I never seen it as nothing. It was always more to me than ‘screwing around’. You have always been more to me,” he muttered gruffly. “And when I thought you were gone, I just couldn’t-“

“Shh, hey,” she hushed him as she pulled herself closer to him and wrapped her leg around him, looping her arms around his middle and resting her head on his chest. “Let’s just focus on the fact that nobody died. That we’re safe. That’s we’re together, okay?” her voice was quiet, and he could sense the exhaustion begin to come over her.

He squeezed her tight and rested his chin on her head. “Okay.”

She murmured one last time that she loved him, making his heart swell, before her breathing became soft and he could tell she was asleep. Before sleep took him too, he reflected one more time on the night that had now passed. It had been hell, a literal hell on earth for him, for all of them. But they’d made it through. They’d lived. And while he knew the night was far from behind them, there were new wounds, new memories and traumas that would need to heal, for now he was content with the fact he got to end it with the woman he loved asleep in his arms. And as he listened to her breathing, his beautiful warrior, he was reminded of the fact that they had survived. They had survived all of this. And they would continue to survive the rest.

Author's Note:

hope you guys enjoyed this epilogue and the story as whole. Anyone curious about my next projects, I currently have a bunch of prompts to do, Stay With Me Stay will continue to be updated and I have another mini fic in the works. As always thank you for all your comments and kudos and just overall support. And also thanks to @starmaammke for keeping me calm during the smut writing process, you da real MVP.